

Press Release



John Hoeven, Governor
Douglass A. Prchal, Director

1600 East Century Avenue, Suite 3
Bismarck, ND 58503-0649

Phone 701-328-5357
Fax 701-328-5363

E-mail parkrec@state.nd.us
www.NDparks.com

For Immediate Release, June 4, 2004

For more information, contact Arik Spencer, 701-328-5357

Secretary Norton Announces Designation of National Recreation Trails in North Dakota

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Trails at Cross Ranch State Park and Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge have been designated as National Recreation Trails. The two trails were among the 37 new National Recreation Trails in 23 states announced by Secretary of the Interior Gale A. Norton, in celebration of National Trails Day on Saturday, June 4th.

The trail system at Cross Ranch State Park extends nearly 15 miles along the Missouri River at the heart of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail. History buffs have the chance to see the Missouri River and its cottonwood river bottoms much as Lewis and Clark saw them. The trail system forms a series of interconnected loops, transitioning from almost 1,500 acres of floodplain woodland to scenic high bluffs overlooking the river. This area has been designated as a State Nature Preserve and is home to a variety of wildlife, including bald eagles and the threatened piping plover. In addition to its natural and cultural resources, trail users enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, cross country skiing, and fishing.

At Des Lacs National Wildlife Refuge, the Munch's Coulee Hiking Trail, a one-mile loop trail, provides spectacular vistas of the Refuge's wildflowers, Lower Des Lacs Lake, and nearby wetlands. The trail's native flora and fauna draw school groups from throughout the area. In addition to its scenic features, this trail offers ample opportunities for bird watching.

Along with inclusion in the National Recreation Trails System, all of the newly designated trails will receive a certificate of designation and National Recreation Trail markers. There are now more than 900 National Recreation Trails that have been designated throughout the United States, totaling more than 10,000 miles.

“Since its inception in 1993, National Trails Day has continued to showcase the health benefits of outdoor recreation on trails--whether it's walking, jogging or bicycling,” said Norton. “National Trails Day has become an important event each year for promoting trails nationwide, especially National Recreation Trails and other components of the National Trails System.”

(BACK)

Play in our backyard!

This year, National Trails Day is expected to bring one million trail enthusiasts out to events happening nationwide. Planned activities include guided hikes, bike rides, volunteer trail clean up projects and other trail celebrations. This year's theme "Take the Path to a Healthier You," continues to target the health benefits of outdoor recreation.

National Recreation Trail designation is an honor given out to those existing trails that have been nominated and meet the requirements for connecting people to local resources and improving their quality of life. The national trail designation is part of a continuing campaign to promote community partnerships and to foster innovative ways to encourage physical fitness. The National Trails System Act of 1968 encourages the Secretary of the Interior to recognize existing community trails that qualify as additions to the National Trails System. The Act promotes enjoyment and appreciation of trails and greater public access.